

NEPAL

KATHMANDU

and the

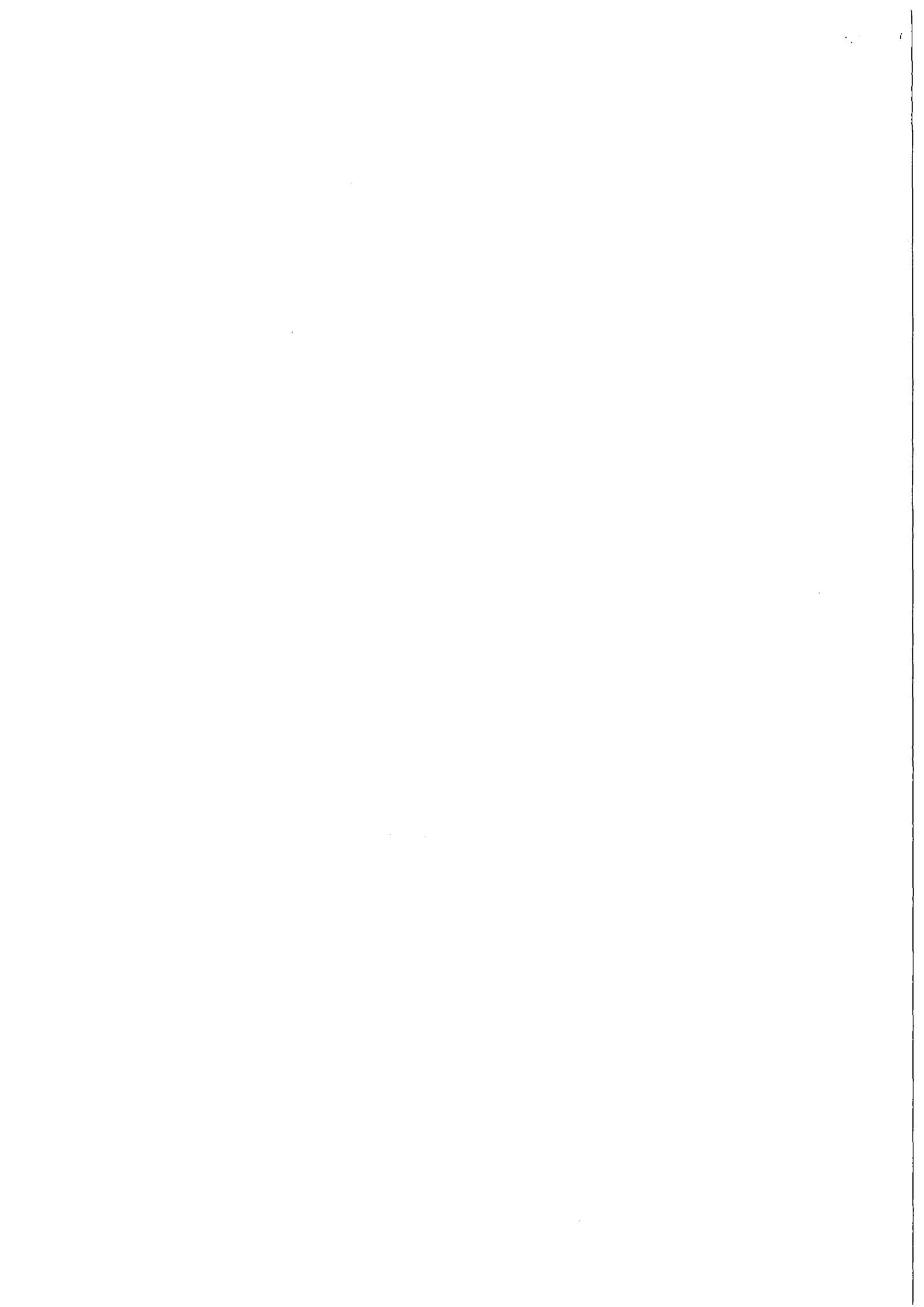
LANGTANG TREK

April 1996



Report of trip by Don Taylor

with Trish Pringle, Bob Davison & Pat Orpin.



KATHMANDU and LANGTANG TREK

31st March - 19th April 1966

Sunday 31st March

Organised Intacab to take the four of us to Gatwick - £56 return. Left Loose at 1600 and arrived Gatwick before 1700. Checked our baggage through, but then had a long wait as our flight was delayed. A good opportunity to sample a range of Scottish Malts!

Boarded an A310-300, belonging to Royal Nepal Airlines (taken out of service after our flight, apparently!), at 2015 and took off at 2040. Brian Blessed was also on our flight, on his way to climb Everest?

The route we followed took us via Frankfurt and Dubai, with two hours at Frankfurt and 90 minutes at Dubai. The first vegetarian meal was very tasty, the others weren't up to much, but the glasses of wine helped them go down.

Monday 1st April

We were flying over the Indus River by 0815 (BST) and touched down in Kathmandu around 1000 (1445 local time). A 13 hour journey from airport to airport, approximately 10 hours in the air.

We each exchanged \$150 for just under 8,000 NR - \$1 = 54NR, £1 = 82NR. Dhrobe Khadka, from Victoria Travels, met us and took us to the Greenwich Village Hotel, which proved to be extremely comfortable, providing good meals at a very reasonable cost.

Not having been advised to bring two passport photos for our trekking permits, Dhrobe then took us into Kathmandu and arranged for them to be taken - 4 x 1 set of poloroid prints at 150 NR. The whole process didn't take much more than an hour, during which we experienced the hustle and bustle, and the fumes of Kathmandu. While waiting for our minibus, we saw such species as CATTLE EGRET, BLACK KITE, HOUSE SWIFT, COMMON MYNA and HOUSE CROW.

Bob and I then explored the local Kopundol area, adding ASIAN MAGPIE ROBIN, EURASIAN CUCKOO, COMMON TAILORBIRD, TREE SPARROW, COMMON SANDPIPER, RED-VENTED BULBUL and a SPOTTED OWLET. It was dark by 1900.

Bharat Basnet of 'Explore Nepal' had laid on a tour of Kathmandu for all of Tuesday, but we arranged to bird locally in the morning and to accept gratefully an afternoon tour.

Tuesday 2nd April

I again explored locally before breakfast, between 0615 - 0700, adding such species as SPOTTED DOVE and BLACK DRONGO.

The morning was spent exploring the Bagmati Valley, between the river and Kopundol, which proved to be very interesting, though

the 'wetland pools' were dry and we were obviously too late to see any Grey-headed Lapwings.

Among the more interesting species identified were INDIAN POND HERON, WHITE-BACKED and GRIFFON VULTURES, STEPPE EAGLE, LITTLE RINGED PLOVER, GREEN SANDPIPER, RED-RUMPED SWALLOW, WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL, PADDY-FIELD (RICHARD'S) and WATER PIPITS, PIED BUSHCHAT, BLUETHROAT, LONG-TAILED and GREY-BACKED SHRIKES, and COMMON ROSEFINCH.

Our guide for the afternoon, Suresh Shakya, was extremely knowledgeable, about the birdlife as well as the history of Kathmandu, and we had a most interesting time, which included seeing large numbers of fruit bats, a breeding colony of CATTLE EGRETS and a NIGHT HERON. Numerous photographs were taken, showing the intricate wood carvings as well as the people.

Wednesday 3rd April

Rose at 0600 for an early breakfast. Picked up and taken to the bus terminal by 0715, seeing 10+ NIGHT HERONS on the way. Our bags were packed safely on the roof of the bus, which left at 0750 for the long journey to Dunche.

A few photographs were possible as we drove through fascinating countryside, villages and small townships. The terracing of the steep hillsides to provide opportunities for cultivating rice and other crops was amazing.

Prior to each police check point, the bus would stop and the roof travellers would climb down and get into the bus, returning again, once we were through the check point!

It was possible to identify a few species as we drove, including GREAT CORMORANT, WHITE-BREASTED KINGFISHER, RED-RUMPED SWALLOW, STONECHAT and PIED BUSHCHAT. At Trisuli Bazar we saw a pair of LINEATED BARBETS and glimpsed a probable SPOTTED OWLET.

You apparently need to be something of an athlete, as a bus conductor. While on the move, he climbed out of a side window onto the roof, in order to collect fares! Our trekking permits were checked at several points and our baggage checked by military personnel.

Drove into the Langtang National Park at 1545, then had a tricky manoeuvre around a tight bend with a steep drop into the valley below, before reaching Dunche at 1735 - a ten hour journey. We booked in at the Hotel Thakali. Extremely basic accommodation, with four of us to one room.

Thursday 4th April

Barking dogs kept us all awake for parts of the night. Bob and I were up at 0530 and explored the area around the village, struggling a little to identify new species. Added GREY BUSHCHAT, WHITE-CHEEKED BULBUL and JUNGLE CROW, as well as a Jackal. A hot shower was very welcome before settling down for breakfast around 0730.

We were all set to go at 0900, commencing our trek by walking down to the valley of the Trisuli Khola below Dunche. Continued to struggle with identification problems, but did add CRESTED BUNTING, NEPAL HOUSE MARTIN and BLACK BULBUL early on. By the river we soon became familiar with BROWN DIPPER, and the attractive WHITE-CAPPED RIVER CHAT and PLUMBEOUS REDSTART.

Bob and I began to lag behind and while we were struggling to identify a distant NUTCRACKER, Trish and Pat had good views of a WALLCREEPER - the only one of the trip! The next attractive species was a pair of MINIVETS, presumably LONG-TAILED, followed by the first of many sightings of BLUE WHISTLING THRUSH.

We stopped for a short while at Thulobarkhu around 1130 and during the next section of the trek struggled with warbler identification. Almost certainly seeing BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLER, quite a number of YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAILS, GOLDEN-SPECTACLED and YELLOW-BROWED WARBLERS.

Around 1300 stopped for lunch at Shano Bharku. During the afternoon heard a Black Woodpecker-like call, added ORANGE-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER, BLACK-FRONTED TIT, BLACK-CAPPED SIBIA - mistaken initially for Maroon Oriole! - WHISKERED YUHINA, PALLAS'S WARBLER, CRIMSON SUNBIRD, COMMON TREECREEPER, an amazing YELLOW-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE and our first GREEN-BACKED TIT.

Booked in at the more comfortable Yeti Hotel in Syabru by 1815. A long, but enjoyable and not too tiring nine-hour trek. For supper we experimented with Dahlbat, but were not impressed, however my pumpkin soup was tasty and the homemade pickles very hot, washed down well with beer.

An almost full moon shone as we retired, listening to but not seeing JUNGLE NIGHTJARS.

Friday 5th April

Rose at 0545, having been kept awake by barking dogs again! Bob and I had to drop off the balcony, as the door was locked. Had a good pre-breakfast session, though struggled to put names to a number of species.

Saw several VERDITER FLYCATCHERS, GREY-FACED WARBLERS and BLACK-THROATED TITS, then added VARIEGATED and STRIATED LAUGHING-THRUSHES, enjoyed watching a flock of RED-HEADED BULLFINCHES, heard what was presumably an ASHY WOODPIGEON and saw quite a number of yesterday's species too, including YELLOW-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE and WHISKERED YUHINA.

We set off again at 0900 and added several more species as we walked down the steep slope from Syabru village to a tributary of the Langtang Khola, including STRIATED PRINIA, PACIFIC SWIFT and GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHER. Around 1100 we made what was to become a fairly regular event - a lemon tea stop. In this area we added BROWN-FRONTED WOODPECKER, GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD and WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH. Soon afterwards we identified a CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA.

The clamber down the steep track across a huge landslip was quite tricky, but not as exhausting as it will be coming back up! In the gorge, on a steep overhanging cliff face, there were several large bees nests, with ASHY DRONGOS nearby and a few ROCK DOVES, but no sign of any Honeyguides. Song from forest ground cover was eventually attributed to a GREY-BELLIED TESIA. The valley sides are thickly forested and identifying warblers in the canopy is extremely difficult, while the sound from the insects along with the rushing river is quite deafening.

Coming across mixed feeding flocks is very exciting, though a lot of species seem to disappear before names can be put to them. In one very active flock there were certainly GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLERS, a GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHER and a BLACK-FACED WARBLER.

We crossed the Langtang Khola on a suspension bridge around 1600 and stumbled across a super family party of Langur monkeys, followed by close views of a FLAIN-BACKED THRUSH and another lemon tea stop around 1730. The next species to be added were GREY-CRESTED TIT and STREAKED LAUGHING-THRUSH.

By now we were beginning to feel the strain of trekking all day and we were extremely pleased to reach Lama Hotel by 1830. The home made tomato soup for supper was excellent and the egg fried rice was filling, while we enjoyed lemon tea both before and after! We then spent some time discussing the plans for the rest of the trek, as there was no way that we were going to continue at such a strenuous pace. We eliminated any thought of taking in Gosainkunda and broke the Langtang Trek down into shorter, more manageable stretches that we could spend time enjoying.

Saturday 6th April

It was a cold night and Bob and I were out again at 0530, listening to several unknown songsters. Early on we added GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD and saw several species with which we were now becoming familiar, like BLUE-WHISTLING THRUSH, GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHER, RED-HEADED BULLFINCH and GREEN-BACKED TIT. We then identified another sunbird - MRS. GOULD'S SUNBIRD - another VERDITER FLYCATCHER then a super little ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER. A few moments of excitement next, as an extremely active feeding party moved by containing a flock of BLACK-THROATED PARROTBILLS, a few YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAILS and several unidentified warblers.

Breakfast takes the form of a fairly liquid porridge with muesli, which provides me with sufficient carbohydrate. The altitude is beginning to effect Trish, who has badly swollen eyes this morning. However, she is anxious to move on and we leave Lama Hotel around 0930, heading for Ghora Tabela.

Bob and I spent some time identifying a most attractive male RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA, but a mixed feeding flock of BLACK-CAPPED SIBIAS, laughing thrushes and warblers moved through so quickly that we struggled to identify much at all.

By 1130 the forest was thinning and we were enjoying magnificent views of the snow-capped Langtang Ridge. Along by the river we were seeing BROWN DIPPER, GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER and ORANGE-

FORGOTTEN FLYCATCHER, while the next new species was RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA, several other species not having been identified. Around 1400 we came across another amazing mixed flock, with GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRDS, FALLAS' WARBLER, GREY-CRESTED and COAL TITS, YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAIL and RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA. As we approached Ghora Tabela at around 1445, we added a RAVEN and a male RUFOUS-BELLIED PIED WOODPECKER.

Ghora Tabela, which is expanding with some attractive, well built new wooden lodges, is set in a fabulous valley, with steep cliffs, scrub covered rocky slopes and patches of forest by the river. We quickly added BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH and BLACK-BROWED TIT, before enjoying a delicious meal of curried potatoes and fried eggs, around 1530.

Birding in the valley produced my first RED-FLANKED BLUETAILED - a superbly plumaged species, as well as SCALY-BELLIED WOODPECKER and a delightful little Pika. Towards dusk a curlew-like call rang out from the hillside and Bob got good views of a HIMALAYAN MONAL, before we settled down to enjoy a super vegetable rice supper, though the fire in the dining area was far too hot!

Met Andy Thorpe and friends - the last time we met him was on Majorca! It was good to exchange some information and sort out a few of our problem species.

Monday 7th April

During our pre-breakfast session we got good views of HIMALAYAN MONALS and saw flocks of SNOW PIGEONS.

We set off for Langtang Village around 0830 and quickly identified some new species as the habitat changed, including BLACK-FACED LAUGHING-THRUSH, BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART, RUFOUS-VENTED BLACK TIT, STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA and a female SPOT-WINGED GROSBEAK. Around 1000 we had excellent views of SPOTTED LAUGHING-THRUSH, which I was able to photograph well. Then a few RUFOUS-BREASTED ACCENTORS obliged us with splendid views.

Another lemon tea stop around 1115, when we saw our first RED-BILLED CHOUGH, while further up the valley we began to get good views of the attractive SNOW PIGEONS. Around 1330 we identified a LAMMERGEIER, then our first HIMALAYAN VULTURE and a flock of ALPINE CHOUGH.

We arrived at Langtang Village around 1345, ordered our lunch and booked into our rooms for the night, with the promise of a hot, solar heated shower. This sounded wonderful, despite the cold wind that was now blowing.

Enjoyed a tasty fried potato, vegetable and cheese lunch, with an apple pie for pudding, then started to explore this attractive mountain valley habitat at around 1600. The weather was changing, with heavy cloud now accompanying the strong, cold wind.

Another LAMMERGEIER and another HIMALAYAN MONAL high in the valley, with numerous ROSY PIPITS and a few GREY WAGTAILS feeding around the small lakes.

It snowed while we ate our supper, warmed by a wood-burning stove and well lit by a paraffin lamp. I enjoyed a vegetable mono, with mixed rice and dahl. By the time we returned to our lodge, the night sky was cloudless and the wind had dropped, but it was very cold.

Monday 8th April

Rose at 0530 to find the shallow pools frozen over and a light sprinkling of snow everywhere. Had super views of another HIMALAYAN MONAL, along with the usual species in this area, including SNOW PIGEON, RED-BILLED and ALPINE CHOUGHs, JUNGLE CROW, BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART, GREY WASTAIL, ROSY PIPIT and BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH, while a lone WREN was the only one of the trip.

We left around 0900, saw another HIMALAYAN MONAL in flight and had good views of a presumed SPARROWHAWK flying with ALPINE CHOUGHs. Then saw two BLACK-FACED LAUGHING-THRUSHES as we walked on up, enjoying the 'blizzards' of SNOW PIGEONS.

Around 1130 we met Pete Davidson (former Canterbury birder) and his wife, who gave us news that the Ibisbills were in and that the thrush-like song at Lama Hotel is made by the drab-looking Long-tailed Thrush. Following this useful meeting, we saw another HIMALAYAN VULTURE and another BUZZARD.

We reached Kyangjin Gompa, at 3,800 metres, around 1330. A quite unbelievable village - essentially of lodges, but with a cheese factory and helicopter landing pads - surrounded by snow-capped peaks - Langtang Lirung at 7,245 metres - and relatively sheltered. From the small plateau there are wonderful views of the Ibisbill breeding habitat and birch forest across the Langtang valley.

Thoroughly enjoyed our lunch, with fresh tomato soup, followed by egg and vegetable fried rice. We decided to stay for two nights at the Himalayan Guest House in comfortable, snug little rooms, off the heated dining area.

Trish needed to rest in the afternoon, as she was finding the altitude difficult to cope with. But the lure of the Ibisbill was too much for the rest of us and we set off up the valley just before 1500 and within an hour or so we were enjoying excellent views of this fabulous species. There were three present in this area, while Andy Thorpe and friends had seen two others elsewhere in the valley. We spent an hour watching and photographing the IBISBILLS, hearing them call and seeing them in flight. We returned to our lodge around 1800.

Tuesday 9th April

Slept soundly and had to be awoken by Bob! Out around 0600 following the track up towards the Lirung Glacier, where Pete Davidson had apparently seen both Snowcock and Snow Partridges. Saw very few birds, but did get excellent views of a Musk Deer.

At breakfast, when bins weren't to hand, a ring-tail Harrier flew over! With Trish and Pat feeling below par, Bob and I set

out around 0915 for the pine forest on the other side of the valley. Prassana and Nima came with us.

Relatively few species occur at this altitude and we saw such residents as SNOW PIGEON, RED-BILLED CHOUGH, ROSY PIPIT and BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART. We then came across a feeding party of tits, including GREY-CRESTED, RUFIOUS-VENTED BLACK and COAL TIT.

As we walked around boggy pools on the edge of the birch forest, we suddenly flushed a WOOD SNIPE - what a bonus! We saw it in flight on three occasions, but never managed to see it on the ground. We then saw four BLOOD PHEASANTS, which particularly pleased Bob, as they provided us with good views walking on the snow in the fairly open forest. Other species here included COMMON TREECREEPER, RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL and RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR.

We returned to our lodge for lunch around 1300, being well pleased with our morning's birding. The meal of garlic soup, potato omelette and apple pie was excellent.

In the afternoon I took Trish down to see the IBISBILLS and we managed to see and photograph one well. Also added WHITE WAGTAIL and RAVEN to the day's list.

Wednesday 10th April

Bob and I rose early and headed towards the valley below Yala Hill, hoping to hear and see both Snowcock and Snow Partridge, but neither performed. We should somehow have got higher, onto a plateau. We returned for breakfast around 0800 having seen very little.

I went back to the snipe area around 0820, while the others set off down the trail towards Langtang, where I joined them later. Sagar came with me. We managed to flush the WOOD SNIPE from virtually the same spot as yesterday, but it flew up high into the birch forest. Sagar flushed it again, but it disappeared into the forest and I was unable to improve on the views I had had on the 9th. Down near the bridge we saw a BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH.

As we rejoined the Langtang trail, I saw a possible RED-THROATED PIPIT, which I photographed, but otherwise managed to find nothing new. We reached Langtang around 1230 and with the attraction of the hot shower, the others had already decided that we would spend the night here. Shortly after lunch a HIMALAYAN VULTURE flew over.

In the afternoon Bob and I scrambled down into the river valley and saw a RUFIOUS-TURTLE DOVE, a small grey-backed accipiter, two BLACK-FACED LAUGHING-THRUSHES, RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL and a puzzling little warbler species!

We enjoyed another excellent supper, packed and went to bed very early, as we planned to leave at 0530 in the morning, aiming for breakfast at Ghora Tabela.

Thursday 11th April

It was a very windy night and the cold wind continued to blow, under a clear sky, as we left Langtang Village for Ghora Tabela as planned. Much the same species were seen on the return route, including a female SCALY-BELLIED WOODPECKER, flocks of VARIEGATED LAUGHING-THRUSHES, a STREAKED LAUGHING-THRUSH, BLACK-CAPPED SIBIA, BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART and BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCHES. A small passerine, eventually identified by carefully studying a photograph taken in this area, proved to be a WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA or TIT-BABBLER. A BLACK EAGLE then drifted to and fro along a high cliff face. As we approached Ghora Tabela, with more bushy vegetation, a male SPOT-WINGED GROSBILL was seen well, along with other species like GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD, GREY WASTAIL, ORANGE-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER, GOLDEN-SPECTACLED and BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLERS and RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA.

We arrived for breakfast shortly before 0900 and while we ate a small, grey backed male accipiter flew over, showing pale edges to its centrally barred tail - a SHIKRA maybe.

Continued along the trail towards Lama Hotel before 1000 and had good views of the RUFOUS-BELLIED PIED WOODPECKER again in the tall forest, where, protected from the wind, the temperature became very warm. More problems with warbler identification! Did manage to identify a STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA and another GREY-FACED LEAF WARBLER. Photographed a BROWN DIPPER at the river, saw more Langur monkeys and another HIMALAYAN VULTURE.

Met Tika Ram Giri with a very small tour group and wished that I could have had more time with him to sort out all the identification problems we were accumulating!

Photographed a Hoary-bellied Squirrel next and saw more NEPAL HOUSE MARTINS and a RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL as we approached Lama Hotel around 1600.

Worked the local area until dusk seeing another GREY-FACED LEAF WARBLER and adding CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHING-THRUSH.

Friday 12th April

Rose at 0515 to the sound of a thrush singing. Was it Long-tailed or just a Blue Whistling-Thrush? Recorded and eventually saw a GREATER SCALY-BREASTED WREN-BABBLER well and then had brief views of a SPOTTED FORKTAIL and managed to identify a rather drab YELLOW-BROWED TIT. Also saw another CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHING-THRUSH and a WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH, as well as a number of other commoner local species, before stopping for breakfast.

We departed around 0900 planning to bird the stretch of the trail between Lama Hotel and Bamboo Lodge thoroughly. Along the early stretch identified such species as BUFF-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER, MRS. GOULD'S SUNBIRD, SOOTY and VERDITER FLYCATCHERS, STREAKED LAUGHING-THRUSH and STRIATED PRINIA.

By 1000 it was feeling hot and we were enjoying species like WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH, GREY BUSHCHAT, ASHY DRONGO, RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA and a flock of WHITE-THROATED LAUGHING-THRUSHES. Near a tea-house some way above the suspension bridge a mixed

feeding flock attracted my attention, while Bob was searching for the Plain-backed Thrush that I had seen here on the way up. Amongst the wide variety of species were CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER, GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHER and numerous GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLERS.

We arrived at the suspension bridge around noon and decided to have lunch at the lodge overlooking the river. I played a tape by the mustard patch and Himalayan knotweed and may just have glimpsed the endemic Nepal Wren Babbler, but it never reappeared - Tika had seen it well here the previous day!

Trish and Pat had good views of both LITTLE FORKTAIL and BROWN DIPPER, which Bob and I were able to see well a little later. We moved on around 1400 and soon saw a few more CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLERS and GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHERS, along with Bob's 'Road-runner' - the STRIATED LAUGHING-THRUSH.

We rejoined Pat and Trish at Bamboo Lodge and made the decision to spend the night in Sherpa Lodge - an interesting arrangement of about eight 'doublebeds' divided by bamboo mat screens and curtained off, in the same large room as the woodburning stove, around which we later ate.

Between 1700-1815 Bob and I explored the local area, but struggled to get to grip with several of the songsters. Did manage, however, to identify a SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER.

We had a convivial evening round the extremely hot stove, enjoying our food and sampling the local beers. We were joined by an Italian and his Nepalese lady friend, as well as our own 'boys'.

Saturday 13th April

Rose at 0515 to some interesting bird song, including a Whimbrel-like bubbling sound - eventually established as coming from a COLLARED GROSBEAK, when we first saw one on the 14th.

By recording a Tesia song and playing it back, I eventually got brilliant close views of a GREY-BELLIED TESIA. Other interesting species that we saw in this locality before breakfast included a SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER again, two LONG-BILLED THRUSHES, CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA and SMALL NILTAVA. Back at Bamboo Lodge it was interesting to watch a JUNGLE CROW perched on a cow's back and pulling out the white hair - presumably to line its nest.

Enjoyed breakfast in the sun, by the river, with a PLUMBEOUS REDSTART and were packed and ready to leave by 0900.

Near the gorge we were able to see another HIMALAYAN VULTURE and a distant accipiter species, while watching another family party of Langur monkeys playing. By the bees nests an ASHY DRONGO called quite clearly and the ROCK DOVES were again present.

It was a slow climb across the huge landslip and although there were several unrecognised calls and songs, very little showed. Had good views of two BLACK-THROATED TITS and reached the high point across the valley from Syabru around 1300, where we

enjoyed our picnic lunch, listening to some amazing echoing calls, which I recorded well - still not identified!

In the afternoon added a few more species including SPECKLED WOODPIGEON, BLACK-LORED TIT and a distant COLLARED OWLET. By the bridge in the valley, around 1500, had further views of a LITTLE FORKTAIL and photographed a male PLUMBEOUS REDSTART displaying. On the long climb up to Syabru I had excellent views of a beautiful WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL in a bamboo thicket, while Bob and Pat saw a DOLLARBIRD in flight and a BLUE-CAPPED ROCK THRUSH. On the open, cultivated hillside we saw another RUFOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR and a CRESTED BUNTING, while high overhead a pair of BONELLI'S EAGLES saw off a migrant ring-tail HEN HARRIER - a magnificent spectacle.

We rejoined Trish at the Mountain View Hotel around 1715, when we sat on the balcony, enjoying another hot lemon tea, as we took in the beautiful view.

Supper was pleasant, but the food not as good as elsewhere. I enjoyed pumpkin soup again and also had a pancake for desert to which we added honey and lemon - very tasty.

Sunday 14th April

Bob and I explored the area above the village between 0530-0830 mainly seeing those species that we'd recorded here before, like YELLOW-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE, GREY BUSHCHAT, WHITE-CHEEKED BULBUL, calls of ASHY WOODPIGEON, CHESTNUT-CROWNED, STREAKED and VARIEGATED LAUGHING-THRUSHES, BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLER, VERDITER FLYCATCHER, LONG-TAILED MINIVET, BLACK-THROATED TIT, RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA, BUFF-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER, ROSY PIPIT in song, and several SPOTTED DOVES. In the bamboo thicket I managed to identify a BLACK-CHINNED BABBLER, while overhead there were two PACIFIC SWIFTS.

We left Syabru around 0930, unaware of the steepness of the climb to Shin Gompa! We heard NUTCRACKERS calling as we climbed through pine forest. Initially we followed the Gosainkunda trail. Around 1100 we enjoyed a lemon tea, plus Tibetan bread and honey stop - still on our way up.

Managed to get a 'head and shoulders' photo of a very small WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA and then glimpsed three OLIVE-BACKED PIPITS in the more open forest. Distant, rather poor views of a large eagle species meant that it remained unidentified. Playing the Collared Owllet tape attracted BLACK-THROATED TIT, WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH and GREY-HOODED WARBLER. Later we saw a BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLER displaying, an ORANGE-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER and more OLIVE-BACKED PIPITS tail-pumping on this occasion. During our picnic lunch stop around 1300 we saw a female RUFOUS-BELLIED PIED WOODPECKER.

In more open areas, towards the high point of this trail, around 1400, there were RED-FLANKED BLUETAILS, BLUE-FRONTED REDSTARTS again and BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCHES, while the perfume from the various flowers and blossom added much to the ambiance. We reached the high point around 1415 to find snow on the ground, within the beautiful pine forest.

Trish and I rejoined Pat and Bob to see a super male COLLARED GROSBEAK. I played the Collared Owlet tape and attracted a wide range of species, including WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH, CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA, BLACK-BROWED, RUFOUS-VENTED and GREY CRESTED TITS.

The mixture of mature pine and rhododendron forest is magnificent, with a spectacular array of red and pink flowers. Towards the Shin Gompa side of the forest we suddenly hear and see a number of WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRDS.

We reached Shin Gompa around 1630. It is at 3,250 metres, set on a hillside devastated by a forest fire, but with pine forest and snow-capped peaks in the distance. The 'his & her' toilets, were well built with dry-stone walls - the best we found!

Bob and I ventured into the forest again and he saw two DARK-THROATED THRUSHES. We also added RED-HEADED BULLFINCH and PALLAS'S WARBLER for the day's list, and returned around 1845.

In the evening, we thoroughly enjoyed a super big meal in a cosy dining room, before retiring in our very cramped accommodation.

Monday 15th April

Nima knocked on our door at 0500 to report that SATYR TRAGOPANS could be heard calling. He came out with Bob and me, determined to find one for us, but sadly we didn't get near any, though we heard several calling. We did have super close views of an HIMALAYAN MONAL.

On the way back I saw a juvenile SPOT-WINGED and a female COLLARED GROSBEAK, while Bob flushed a WOODCOCK, otherwise much the same species we'd already seen, like RUFOUS-VENTED TIT, WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH, RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA, GOLDEN-SPECTACLED and BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLERS and WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD.

Just before breakfast, out on the 'patio', two BUZZARDS flew over and a GREY BUSHCHAT was seen nearby. We were ready to leave before 0930 and the steep, downhill trail followed the edge of the forest for much of the way. An attractive PINK-BROWED ROSEFINCH was one of the first additions, followed by three OLIVE-BACKED FIPITS and good views of a SPOTTED LAUGHING-THRUSH.

We could hear distant calls from NUTCRACKERS, an ORIENTAL CUCKOO and HILL PARTRIDGE. As we walked on down we saw familiar species like ORANGE-GORGETTED FLYCATCHER, RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA, CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA and a female RUFOUS-BELLIED PIED WOOD-PECKER. At Chandrabari we stopped for a lemon tea around 1130, when we struggled to identify a pair of RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHERS and a single SOOTY FLYCATCHER, as they flitted in the canopy.

A pair of LONG-TAILED MINIVETS were seen courtship feeding, but during our picnic lunch very little was heard or seen, apart from BLYTH'S CROWNED WARBLERS. Further on we saw another super ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER and playing of the Collared Owlet tape attracted BLYTH'S and GREY-HOODED WARBLERS, GREEN-BACKED and BLACK-THROATED TITS, GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD and BUFF-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER.

By this time Trish and Pat had gone on ahead, while Bob and I concentrated on birding. It was a steep descent, through changing habitat, as we headed for the Trisuli Khola. The next new species was BROWN BULLFINCH and we then had good views of a number of SPECKLED WOODPIGEONS, two more YELLOW-BILLED BLUE MAGPIES, a RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA and what was eventually identified as a female CRIMSON-BROWED FINCH.

Nearer the river, in damper forest, I called up a GREY-HEADED WOODPECKER, by imitating its call. Around 1630 we stumbled across three Yellow-throated Martens, but it was 1700 before we reached the river crossing, having walked along a narrow path across a precipitous cliff face. Along the valley, back to Dunche we saw species like LONG-TAILED SHRIKE, GREY BUSHCHAT, STRIATED PRINIA, WHITE-CHEEKED BULBUL and a CRESTED BUNTING.

We arrived at the Langtang View Hotel around 1800 - a long final trek. Enjoyed a lovely hot shower, but felt strangely off colour during the evening meal, unable to finish it, or my beer! Prassana, Sagar and Nima joined us for the last evening and we presented them with 800 NR each for their excellent service and company.

Tuesday 16th April

Slept well and rose at 0600 to pack. Had a delicious special porridge, with muesli and fruit, and a good milky coffee. The morning sky was cloudy, for the first time since we arrived. The bus departed around 0745.

Much less hassle at the check points on the way back and we arrived at Trisuli around 1045, where we stopped for 30 minutes. As we left we were able to identify a PURPLE SUNBIRD.

Our driver seems to think he's driving an express - we're overtaking all the other buses and making extremely good time, getting back to Kathmandu central bus station by 1500 - a seven-and-a-half-hour journey! Few species of note were identified during the journey.

We returned to our most comfortable accommodation in the Greenwich Village Hotel by 1545 and enjoyed a cold beer from the fridge in our room. We went for a walk around 1700, visiting a Nepal Crafts showroom - some very fine work, but extremely pricey.

I then wandered around the Kopundol area again, seeing the expected species, but also a LARGE HAWK CUCKOO, SPOTTED DOVE, a GREENISH WARBLER, a GOLDEN ORIOLE in song, a flock of SCALY-BREASTED MUNIAS and an *acrocephalus* type warbler, which I could not identify.

We enjoyed an extremely tasty vegetable curry for supper, followed by curd and honey.

Wednesday 17th April

Slept very well and rose at 0530 to explore the Kopundol gardens again. Spent some time making notes on the same *acrocephalus* type warbler, as it fed in the 'garden' of dried mustard crop.

Also saw a possible DUSKY WARBLER. Was completely thrown by a small flock of SCALY-BREASTED MUNIAS, which contained two birds, one showing yellow scaly underparts and a yellowish/rufous tail, while the second appeared grass green!

We had breakfast at 0700 and took a taxi to Bokarna Safari Park around 0730, arriving there at 0800, only to find that it was closed for seven months!! The taxi fair cost us 650 NR. We pleaded to be allowed in, but failed and decided that the best we could do was to explore the area around the southeast boundary wall. The altitude is about 1,300 metres.

We could hear BLUE-THROATED BARBETS calling and saw one well, while there were BLACK KITES galore. As we walked we saw a STEPPE EAGLE and a pair of PIED BUSHCHATS feeding fledged young. It then started to rain as we explored the local rubbish dump.

The area was essentially agricultural land, with small wooded hillocks, some of which contained a wide variety of species and in between showers we enjoyed some excellent birding. We saw a female FULVOUS-BREASTED WOODPECKER, a RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER, two GREAT BARBETS, a pale phased BOOTED EAGLE, an INDIAN POND HERON, two super ORANGE-HEADED GROUND THRUSHES, a GREENISH WARBLER in song, a COMMON IORA, a pair of beautiful PARADISE FLYCATCHERS and had a brief glimpse of a BEE-EATER species in flight. An accipiter being mobbed by a parakeet may have been a CRESTED GOSHAWK and we saw several warblers to which we failed to put names.

We continued to bird in this area until 1330, when a thunder-storm broke bringing torrential rain. We enjoyed an excellent picnic lunch, having added such species as RING-NECKED PARAKEET, a RED TURTLE DOVE, LONG-TAILED SHRIKE, COPPERSMITH BARBET, ASIAN BROWN and GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHERS, a family party of BLACK-LORED TITS, a WHITE-EYE, and a LONG-BILLED VULTURE low overhead. There were also far too many species that we failed to identify, including more warblers - one rather like a Garden Warbler - a blue Flycatcher, a Dove and a Rosefinch.

We walked to a small village, getting soaked to the skin, before catching a bus back to Kathmandu central bus station, which cost a mere 20 NR! From there we hired two 'tuc-tuc' like taxis - Trish and I were charged 100 NR, while Bob and Pat bartered with their driver and paid 80 NR. We got back to the hotel around 1530.

As the rain eased, I went out birding again locally and got permission to explore a large walled garden, from which the GOLDEN ORIOLE was singing earlier. I had an interesting chat with the owner and also managed to see a HOOPOE and another LONG-TAILED SHRIKE. I returned to the hotel around 1830, before another heavy thunderstorm broke.

We organised a taxi for a visit to Phulchowki on our last day.

Thoroughly enjoyed another delicious vegetable curry for supper.

Thursday 18th April

We had an early breakfast and departed in the taxi just after 0600. We started up the Phulchowki road at 0640, having checked our pickup point at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens with our driver.

We reached the top about an hour later at 0745, in beautiful weather conditions, with a cloudless sky. Several HOUSE MARTINS flew around the top of the mountain and as we walked down we could hear HILL PARTRIDGE and ORIENTAL CUCKOO calling and saw such species as ORANGE-GORGETTED, ASIAN BROWN and VERDITER FLYCATCHERS, GREY BUSHCHAT, CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHING-THRUSH, WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH, GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD, BLACK-CAPPED SIBIA, CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA, YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAIL and CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA, adding MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE, CRESTED SERPENT EAGLE, CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH, HOARY BARWING and TAILED WREN-BABBLER for the trip, up until around 1130, by which time Bob and Pat were well below us.

Around 1145, I foolishly took a short cut, thinking I would catch Trish up round the next bend - I never did! As I walked down the hillside, I flushed a possible Kalij Pheasant, but I failed to see any plumage detail, other than it looked greyish. I found several STRIATED PRINIAS in song on an open hillside overlooking Godaveri. I stopped for a quick picnic lunch just before 1300 and headed on down as fast as narrow footpaths would take me, burning up carbohydrate and finding my blood sugar as low as 2.5 at 1330! I stopped to try and identify an active flock of BLACK-CHINNED BABBLERS and saw another CRESTED SERPENT EAGLE high in the distance.

I arrived in the gardens of the research establishment before 1400! Back on the road I heard several alarm calls and saw two ASIAN BARRED OWLS, one well, before bumping into Bob and Pat, much to their surprise. Sadly, Trish had not caught up with them, so I headed back up the Phulchowki mountain road, getting a lift around 1425 and finding Trish about twenty minutes later, much distressed by my disappearance. My blood sugar was now just 1.8!

Fortunately, as we walked back down, our Taxi driver appeared at 1510 and drove us down to the Botanical Gardens, which took about half-an-hour. We then explored this attractive area of open parkland and managed to add a few more species, seeing RED-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE, GREAT and BLUE-THROATED BARBETS, a probable BLUE-CAPPED ROCK THRUSH, GREAT (Grey) TIT, BUFF-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER, GREY-HEADED FLYCATCHER, OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT, distant flight views of both MOUNTAIN HAWK and CRESTED SERPENT EAGLES and CATTLE EGRET. Warblers again provided identification problems, but possibly included WESTERN CROWNED and LARGE-BILLED.

We departed from this fascinating birding area at 1700, having obviously missed quite a number of other species that occur here, and were back in our Hotel before 1730. The Taxi driver had the nerve to charge us 2,500 NR.

Both Bob and Trish were feeling under the weather, so just Pat and I enjoyed a final evening meal together - not the way we would have chosen to celebrate the end of a most enjoyable and successful trip!

Friday 19th April

Rose at 0500 and had an early breakfast, though Trish wasn't able to take anything. Prassana arrived around 0600, but the Explore Nepal minibus was a little late. However, we arrived at the airport around 0630 and it took an absolute age to get our baggage checked in. The airport tax was 700 NR.

The last species we saw, as we boarded the aircraft were BARN and RED-RUMPED SWALLOWS. We took off at 0910 and it was fascinating to see the peaks of the Himalayas showing so clearly to the north, as we flew virtually level with them.

The plane was not full and Trish was able to lie across three seats, providing her with a much needed rest. After about four hours we arrived at Dubai, where we stayed for about an hour and we bought a litre each of Grants and VAT 69 Whisky at just under \$9 per bottle.

The flight to Frankfurt took about six-and-a-half hours and we were there for over an hour-and-a-half. The hour-long flight took us to Gatwick by 2345 (1900 BST) - nearly 18 hours since we left the Greenwich Village Hotel.

Had a little difficulty locating our Intacab transport. The driver had a minibus, which he was apparently unable to park, so it was a question of making phone calls. Eventually, around 2000, we found him and we were back home before 2100 - a 20 hour journey door-to-door.

Summary of Costs

(Per person)

Overall trip through Naturetrek and World Wildlife	£1,216
Visa from Royal Nepal Embassy	£20
Intacab Taxi to and from Gatwick	£14
Greenwich Village Hotel - evening meals/picnic lunches	£25
Tips for Guides & Porters	£8
Airport Tax	£9
Taxis on 17th & 18th	£10
Drinks on Trek plus postcards, stamps, presents etc	? £23
Total	£1,325

Itinerary Summary

- 1st **Arrive Kathmandu** Kopundol district in evening
- 2nd Kopundol district, Bagmati Valley west of Patan, Kathmandu
- 3rd Kathmandu - Dunche
- 4th **Commence trek** Dunche - Syabru
- 5th Syabru - Lama Hotel
- 6th Lama Hotel - Ghora Tabela
- 7th Ghora Tabela - Langtang
- 8th Langtang - Kyangjin Gompa
- 9th Kyangjin Gompa
- 10th Kyangjin Gompa - Langtang
- 11th Langtang - Lama Hotel
- 12th Lama Hotel - Bamboo Lodge (staying in Sherpa Lodge)
- 13th Bamboo Lodge - Syabru
- 14th Syabru - Shin Gompa
- 15th Shin Gompa - Dunche **End Trek**
- 16th Dunche - Kathmandu, Kopundol district in evening
- 17th Kopundol district, Gokarna area, Kopundol district late pm
- 18th Phulchowki and Godaveri Botanical Gardens
- 19th Depart Kathmandu

Systematic List

The list (almost) follows the nomenclature used in *A Guide to the Birds of Nepal* by Carol and Tim Inskipp. The figure in brackets shows the number of days on which a species was recorded (max 18) and an asterisk indicates that the species was new for DWT.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (1)

Four were seen on Tadi Khola, en route between Kathmandu and Dunche on the 3rd.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (2)

Only seen in Kathmandu, where at least 10 were present at the artificial lake, near the Royal Palace on the 3rd, with one glimpsed there the previous day.

***Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* (2)

Seen only in the Kathmandu Valley, with at least two near the Bagmati river west of Patan on the 2nd and one near Gokarna on the 17th.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (5)

Apart from a few along Tadi Khola on the 3rd, only seen in the Kathmandu area, with a peak day total of about 100 on the 2nd, which included roosting birds in the town, opposite the Royal Palace. The smart breeding plumage always encourages me to refer to them by the old name of Buff-backed Heron.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (4)

Ones and twos were seen in scattered wetland localities in the Kathmandu area.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus* (6)

Only seen in the Kathmandu area, with a day total of 100+ on the 2nd. Little attention was paid to plumage detail, but from slides taken the birds were obviously of the local Black-eared race *M. m. lineatus*.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* (2)

All sightings were in the upper Langtang Valley, essentially between Langtang and Kyangjin Gompa. Sightings of single adults involving two on the 7th and five the next day may possibly have all referred to one bird, though at least two is more likely.

***Oriental White-backed Vulture** *Gyps bengalensis* (1)

One adult was seen well on the 2nd, along the Bagmati river valley west of Patan.

***Long-billed Vulture** *Gyps indicus* (1)

The only confirmed sighting was of one near Gokarna on the 17th, but at least 10 vultures, seen from the bus between Dunche and Kathmandu on the 16th, may or may not have included this species.

***Himalayan Griffon Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* (5)

Singles were seen almost daily between the 7th-13th, with two on the 11th, almost all being above Langtang village, though one

was seen near Lama Hotel on the 11th and near Bamboo Lodge on the 13th.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (1)

At least five along the Bagmati river valley west of Patan on the 2nd were considered to be of this species.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* (1)

Two singles were seen at Phulchowki on the 18th.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (1)

A migrant ring-tail was seen at Syabru on the 13th, when it was 'bombed' by a pair of Bonelli's Eagles, whose territory it had obviously invaded. Another migrant ring-tail, presumably of this species, was seen at Kyangjin Gompa on the 9th.

Accipiter species: the eight sightings, all of birds in flight, caused considerable identification problems. Most seemed to show very pale brown, finely marked underparts.

Goshawk sp *Accipiter gentilis/trivirgatus* (1)

A large hawk, being mobbed by a parakeet, was seen in flight at Gokarna on the 17th, but no plumage details were noted.

Northern Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (1)

One seen and photographed between Langtang and Kyangjin Gompa on the 8th appears to be of this species, though looking very pale.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* (1)

At Ghora Tabela on the 10th reasonable views suggested a male of this species, having grey upperparts. From the underside the tail showed paler, unbarred outer feathers. (Possibly out of range at this altitude?)

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (?)

Two singles were seen in the Bagmati valley west of Patan on the 2nd, another near Kyangjin Gompa on the 8th and two over Shin Gompa on the 15th. The proportions of all suggested *Buteo buteo* and the plumages of four of the birds were essentially the same, from the underside showing dark primary tips, a small dark patch on the carpal joint and a very finely barred or unbarred tail, lacking a broad terminal band. The second bird near Patan showed streaky brown markings on the underparts, while one of the Shin Gompa birds had darker tips to the underwing coverts and noticeably white primary bases on the upperwing. The wide variation known to exist in buzzard plumages really eliminates the possibility of identifying any of these birds as Upland Buzzards *Buteo hemilasius*, though the white primary bases suggest this species, and most were probably of the race *B.b.japonicus*.

***Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis* (2)

One was seen well between Langtang and Ghora Tabela on the 11th and ED saw another at Phulchowki on the 18th.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila rapax nipalensis* (3)

At least three were seen well in the Bagmati valley west of Patan on the 2nd, with another three or more en route between

Dunche and Kathmandu on the 16th and one, which was again seen well, at Gokarna on the 17th.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* (1)

A pale phase individual was seen at Gokarna on the 17th.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* (1)

A pair was seen well, apparently defending its territory against a migrant Hen Harrier, over Syabru on the 13th.

***Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis* (1)

One was seen well in flight at Phulchowki early on the 18th, with distant views of a second later in the day.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (5)

Surprisingly few were seen, with singles on just five dates, including Dunche on the 3rd and 4th, Ghora Tabela on the 6th, Langtang on the 7th and Syabru on the 13th.

Common Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola* (2)

Several were heard calling in the Shin Gompa area on the 15th and at Phulchowki on the 18th, but not one was seen.

***Blood Pheasant** *Ithaginis cruentus* (1)

A group of four was seen high in the birch woods of Kyangjin Gompa on the 9th.

Satyr Tragopan *Tragopan satyra* (1)

Several were heard calling from the rhododendron forests around Shin Gompa on the 15th, but despite considerable effort none was seen.

***Himalayan Monal** *Lophophorus impejanus* (5)

Considerable success with this species, though the photographic image is minute! First seen at dusk on the rocky slopes above Ghora Tabela on the 6th, with good views of two males there the next morning. Superb flights views were obtained of one on the 8th above Langtang, where calls were heard again on the 10th. Finally one was seen extremely well at close range in the rhododendron forest near Shin Gompa on the 15th.

***Ibisbill** *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* (2)

At Kyangjin Gompa three were seen on the 8th and one the next afternoon, at the upper end of the Langtang valley (Andy Thorpe and friends had two more at the lower end). There were opportunities to study and photograph one bird at rest, on the 8th and 9th, and to see and photograph it successfully in flight, when it was also heard calling.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (1)

One was seen along the Bagmati river west of Patan on the 2nd.

***Wood Snipe** *Gallinago nemoricola* (2)

One was seen in flight on three occasions on the 9th and twice on the 10th, when it disappeared into the high forested hillside at Kyangjin Gompa. It was flushed on both dates from the same piece of boggy ground at the foot of the hillside.

A heavy looking snipe, with broad, more rounded wings, flying more slowly and more directly than Common Snipe. The tail was noticeably short and lacked any white, looking almost uniformly brown. The upperwing showed a greyish area across the coverts, and a grey trailing edge to the secondaries. The underwing was noticeably closely barred and the body heavily barred. This species seems to fill the niche occupied by the Andean Snipe in the high Andes and in many respects is very similar.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* (1)

BD flushed one in the rhododendron forest at Shin Gompa on the 15th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (1)

One was seen along the Bagmati river west of Patan on the 2nd.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* (2)

Along the Bagmati river west of Patan one was seen on the 1st, with at least five the next day.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* (2)

The presence of feral pigeons was not noted, but three-four 'genuine' members of this species were present at the 'beehive' rock face along the Langtang Khola near Bamboo Lodge on the 5th and 13th.

***Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota* (5)

Seen daily between the 7th-11th above Ghora Tabela, with day total estimates of 500 in the Langtang area. "A blizzard of Snow Pigeons" was an apt description coined by BD.

***Speckled Woodpigeon** *Columa hodgsonii* (2)

One was identified on the 13th on the hillside opposite Syabru, and about 15 were seen along the Trisuli valley between Chandrabari and Dunche on the 15th.

Ashy Woodpigeon *Columba pulchricollis* (4)

Calls attributed to this species were noted on the 5th, 13th and 14th in the Syabru area, and again at Phulchowki on the 18th, but not one was seen.

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* (1)

One was seen well on the 17th in the Gokarna area.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* (2)

One was seen well on the 10th, along the Langtang Khola below Langtang village, with another at Gokarna on the 17th.

***Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis* (5)

Commonly seen and heard in the Kopundol area on the 2nd, 16th and 17th, when one was also seen at Gokarna. At least five were present at Syabru on the 14th.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* (1)

At least five were heard and seen in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

Unidentified parakeets were also seen over Kopundol on the 2nd and 16th.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparverioides* (1)

One, seen in flight over a large garden in the Kopundol district on the 3rd, was assumed to be of this species, but only based on apparent size and distribution.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (7)

Quite commonly heard and occasionally seen in the Kopundol district, in the Syabru area, and around Gokarna and Phulchowki.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* (3)

Heard calling between Dunche and Syabru on the 4th, at Syabru on the 14th, around Shin Gompa on the 14th and 15th, with several at Phulchowki on the 18th, but not one was seen - even when calling from an adjacent tree!

Common Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea* (1)

BD saw and heard up to 10 on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei* (1)

One seen distantly, but quite well, near Syabru on the 13th.

What appeared to be a yellowish face, with two large black eyepatches, was a view from the rear, not only designed to confuse those species that might prey on them!

***Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides* (1)

Two were seen, one extremely well, near the Botanical Gardens in Godaveri on the 18th.

***Spotted Owlet** *Athene brama* (1)

One was seen well in the Kopundol district on the 1st, with another, probably of this species at Trisuli on the 3rd.

Jungle Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus* (1)

Several were heard clearly at Syabru on the evening of the 4th.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* (2)

On the 5th four and three were seen around Syabru, where two were present on the 14th.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* (6)

Commonly seen in the Kathmandu valley. At least two were also seen with a flock of Nepal House Martins, en route from Dunche to Syabru, on the 4th.

White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* (3)

On the 2nd four were seen along the Bagmati valley west of Patan, one pair excavating a river bank nest hole. Two were seen on the 3rd, en route from Kathmandu to Dunche, along the Tadi Khola, and three were seen in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* (1)

BD saw one in flight at Syabru on the 13th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* (1)

One was seen in a large garden in the Kopundol district on the 17th.

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* (2)

At least two were present in the Gokarna area on the 17th, with two seen in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri the next day.

***Lineated Barbet** *Megalaima lineata* (1)

The only record involved two at the Trisuli check point on the 3rd, where they were seen carrying nesting material.

***Blue-throated Barbet** *Megalaima australis* (2)

At Gokarna on the 17th two were seen and another 10 or so were heard, with one seen well and another heard in the Biological Gardens at Godaveri the next day.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* (1)

One was glimpsed in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker *Picus squamatus* (3)

Extremely elusive initially, but eventually three were seen well, with the first, a female, at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, followed by a male in the same stretch of forest the next morning. Another female was seen between Langtang and Ghora Tabela on the 11th.

Darjeeling Pied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos darjellensis* (1)

BD identified a pair in the Ghora Tabela area on the 7th.

***Rufous-bellied Pied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* (4)

The first was seen in a small patch of forest at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, with a pair in the same area on the 11th and single females near Shin Gompa on the 14th and 15th.

***Brown-fronted Pied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos auriceps* (1)

A pair was seen on the 5th en route between Syabru and Bamboo Lodge.

***Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos maciei* (1)

A single female was seen well in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

Brown-throated Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola* (1)

About five were seen in the Gokarna area on the 17th - identification based on distribution alone!

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (6)

Only seen in the Kathmandu valley region, with day totals of 10-20+ on the 2nd-3rd and 16th-19th.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (4)

Ones and twos were mainly identified in the Kathmandu valley region, though a few were seen on both bus journeys, on the 2nd and 16th, between Dunche and Trisuli, with a day total of 20+ on the latter date.

All those looked at carefully showed whitish underparts with no obvious streaking.

***Nepal House Martin** *Delichon nipalensis* (7)

The flocks of House Martins seen all appeared to contain birds with dark throats and vents, with contrasting white underparts and dark underwing coverts. Occasionally the underwing coverts would appear more grey, but the underparts of those individuals were also pure white. The main concentrations were noted between the 4th-6th and 11th-13th, along the Langtang Khola between Syabru and Ghore Tabela, with day totals of 50+. At least two were also seen near Langtang on the 8th.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica* (1)

Three were seen flying around the peak of Phulchowki on the 18th. Somewhat carelessly, I only noted that they had noticeably white underparts, lacking the black throat and vent of the previous species. I did not look at the underwing coverts!

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae rufulus* (1)

On the 2nd, in the Bagmati valley west of Patan, at least 20 pipits were seen - some carrying food were obviously nesting - and these were all considered to be **Paddyfield Pipits** *A.n.rufulus*.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (3)

Three pipits in the rhododendron/pine forest between Syabru and Shin Gompa on the 14th, clearly showed the white ear covert patch of this species and three more a short while later pumped their tails quite distinctively. The next morning three more were seen along the edge of the forest. One was also identified satisfactorily in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri on the 18th.

[Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* (1)

On the 10th, between Kyangjin Gompa and Langtang, I photographed a pipit that showed several characteristics of this species, but neither the photograph nor my notes are 100% conclusive.]

***Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus* (6)

Seen daily from the 7th-11th between Ghora Tabela and Kyangjin Gompa, with day total estimates of 50+. About five were also seen between Syabru and Shin Gompa on the 14th.

A variety of plumages were noted, some looking very similar to Water Pipit, but the supercilium was creamy, or buffy cream rather than white, and the legs were pale pink.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* (1)

On the 2nd, in the Bagmati valley west of Patan, at least 10 pipits were seen showing characteristics of this species.

Without at this stage having any knowledge of Rosy Pipit plumages, I was and still am convinced that these were Water Pipits. My notes include - clean, pinkish flush to throat, very white supercilium, grey head, well marked dark mantle and dark legs.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (10)

Commonly seen in widespread localities, even as high as Kyangjin Gompa, with day totals of 5+ on several occasions.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (6)

A range of different plumages was seen, but very few actually noted. On the 'Ibisbill' stretch of the Langtang Khola there were up to 10 'black-backed' birds on the 8th and 9th. With a similar number in the Bagmati valley on the 2nd, but just ones and twos noted elsewhere.

The black-backed races included some with elliptical white eye-patches, while one of the pale races was pure white from the crown to the vent, with dark grey on the nape, mantle, wings and tail. What a confusing species it is in these parts!

***White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla maderaspatensis* (1)

Up to three were seen on the 2nd in the Bagmati valley west of Patan.

Minivet species: Not knowing initially what identification criteria to use caused some confusion regarding minivets, and once the importance of looking at the tertial tips was learned the opportunities to put it into practice were few!

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* (1)

A female in the Gokarna area on the 17th appeared to show a yellowthroat and yellow tips to the tertials.

[Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris* (1)

A female's call, heard on Phulchowki on the 18th, was noted as a rising 'squeeze' repeated five times, which has similarities to the 'shrrri...shrrrei (rising)...twiwiwi' (last note lower), described in the *Birds of India and Pakistan*.]

***Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus* (5)

If the red inverted 'U' on the secondaries is diagnostic, then the vast majority of minivet sightings refer to this species. At least four were seen between Dunche and Syabru on the 4th, with several at Syabru the next morning. Several were present at Lama Hotel on the 12th and at Syabru on the 14th. On the steep descent from Shin Gompa, on the 15th, courtship feeding was witnessed and the all dark tertials of the female and the soft 'chib-chib' calls of the male suggested this species.

***Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris* (1)

A female, showing characteristics of this species, was seen at Lama Hotel on the 6th.

My brief notes include 'grey crown, paler face, lacking yellow. Yellow in wing as illustrated in *A Pictorial Guide*.

***White-cheeked Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys* (6)

Seen quite commonly in the Syabru area, where at least five were present on the 4th-5th and one or more on the 13th-14th. About five were noted on the 15th towards Dunche and one in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

***Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* (6)

Quite commonly seen, with day totals in excess of 10 at various sites in the Kathmandu valley and an estimated 50+ on the 17th, including the Kopundol and Gokarna areas.

***Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes madagascariensis* (4)

Five or more were seen on the 4th and 5th between Dunche and Syabru, with about 20 on the 13th, between Bamboo Lodge and Syabru. At least five were also seen around Gokarna on the 17th.

A confusing name for an essentially grey bird, that only looks black in certain light conditions.

***Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia* (1)

One was seen well in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

***Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons* (1)

One was seen well on the 5th, en route from Syabru, before dropping down towards Langtang Khola.

***Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii* (6)

The first was seen on Trisuli Khola, below Dunche on the 4th, with several sightings along Langtang Khola between the 6th-12th from the suspension bridge below Lama Hotel as high as Kyangjin Gompa.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes nipalensis* (1)

Only one was seen, at Langtang on the 8th. A very dark brown wren compared with the nominate race.

***Rufous-breasted Accentor** *Prunella strophiatea* (4)

First seen between Ghora Tabela and Langtang on the 6th, when six were noted. At least four were seen on the 9th at the bottom of the birch clad slopes at Kyangjin Gompa, with two there the next day. One was also seen at Syabru on the 13th.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* (1)

Two were seen on the 2nd in the Bagmati valley west of Patan.

***Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* (7)

First seen at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, with almost daily sightings of up to five until the 12th, between Kyangjin Gompa and Lama Hotel. Two were also seen on the 14th, when approaching Shin Gompa.

What a superb looking bird, no wonder it's so much appreciated when it occurs in Britain.

Asian Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* (6)

Commonly seen on the 2nd-3rd and again between the 16th-19th, at various localities in the Kathmandu valley.

***Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis* (7)

Between 5-10 were seen daily from the 7th-11th, essentially between Ghora Tabela and Kyangjin Gompa. A similar number were also seen on the 14th and 15th in the Shin Gompa area.

***Plumbeous Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus* (7)

Seen daily between the 4th-6th and almost daily from the 11th-15th, with day totals of up to 10. All the sightings occurred along stretches of the Trisuli Khola and Langtang Khola, or their tributaries, between Dunche and Lama Hotel.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (5)

At least two cock birds were seen in the Bagmati valley west of Patan on the 2nd, with several the next day en route between Kathmandu and Dunche. One-two were present at Syabru on the 13th-14th and about five were seen on the return journey from Dunche to Kathmandu.

No time was spent studying plumage detail to establish which eastern races were being seen.

***Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata* (3)

The first was seen in the Bagmati valley west of Patan on the 2nd, with at least three the next day between Kathmandu and Dunche. At least five were present in the Gokarna area on the 17th, including a breeding pair with newly fledged young.

***Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea* (10)

First seen at Dunche on the 4th and commonly recorded, almost daily until the 8th and between the 11th-15th, with day totals of up to 10+. The highest sightings were at Langtang and Shin Gompa, all being between approximately 1,800 - 3,500.

***White-capped River Chat** *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus* (7)

First seen near Dunche on the 4th and daily to the 6th, between the 11th-13th and on the 15th, with at least six on the 5th, between Syabru and Lama Hotel, but non higher than Ghora Tabela.

***Blue-capped Rock-Thrush** *Monticola cinclorhyncha* (1)

BD identified a male of this species near Syabru on the 13th. Although not seen well enough to be 100% sure of the identification, a bird with essentially blue upperparts, orange underparts and a small white wing patch, seen on the 18th in the Godaveri Botanical Gardens, was probably of this species.

***Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* (1)

One was seen perched in a tall tree high on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myiophonus caeruleus* (11)

Seen virtually daily from the 4th-15th, with the first near Dunche and a peak day estimate of 20+ on the 6th, between Lama Hotel and Ghora Tabela. At least two were also seen on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Plain-backed Mountain Thrush** *Zoothera mollissima* (1)

One was seen well just above the suspension bridge between Bamboo Lodge and Lama Hotel on the 5th.

***Long-billed Mountain Thrush** *Zoothera monticola* (1)

Two were seen well near Bamboo Lodge on the 13th.

***Orange-headed Ground Thrush** *Zoothera citrina* (1)

Two were seen well in the Gokarna area on the 17th. Stunning looking birds.

***White-collared Blackbird** *Turdus albocinctus* (2)

Only seen in the rhododendron/pine forest near Shin Gompa on the 14th and 15th, with about 20 on the former date.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* (1)

BD saw two high in the rhododendron forest near Shin Gomba on the 14th.

***Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* (2)

Singles were seen well on the Langtang Khola, by the suspension bridge near Bamboo Lodge, on the 12th and below the bridge near Syabru the next day.

At the suspension bridge I noted the amazing pale pink legs.

***Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* (1)

One (BD saw a pair) was seen near the Langtang Khola at Lama Hotel on the 12th.

***Chestnut-headed Tesia** *Tesia castaneocoronata* (2)

Two were seen extremely well near Bamboo Lodge on the 13th, with another on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Grey-bellied Tesia** *Tesia cyaniventer* (2)

One was seen extremely well - creeping into view in response to its taped song - near Bamboo Lodge on the 13th. Others were heard singing (recorded on tape) the same day and on the 12th, in the same general area. In retrospect also heard on the 5th.

Bush Warblers: neither Aberrant nor Grey-sided, which may well have been present, were noted.

Fantail Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* (1)

One was seen in song flight on the 2nd in the Bagmati valley west of Patan - BD had up to three there.

***Striated Prinia** *Prinia criniger* (4)

Singles were seen and heard singing at Syabru on the 5th, near Lama Hotel on the 12th and near Dunche on the 15th, with at least three on Phulchowki on the 18th.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus autorius* (3)

One-three were seen on the 1st and 2nd in the Kopundol district, with at least two there on the 17th.

[*Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* (2)

The following summary is based on notes made on the 16th and 17th, when at two-three warblers, probably of this species, were observed feeding in a seeding crop of mustard, occasionally flying into adjacent small trees, in a large garden in the Kopundol district.

Appeared Reed Warbler-like at a glance, but overall more grey/brown plumaged. Upperparts olive/brown, uniform paler yellowish/olive underparts, more yellowish on throat, when head raised (evening light). Dark eye-line. Pale supercilium thickest over the eye, coming to a point just behind it. Typical sloping forehead, though crown quite peaked at times. Seemed quite short-winged, primary tips just covering uppertail coverts. Brownish upper mandible, lower mandible paler with dark tip, bill length equal to or greater than lores. Pale legs (evening), brownish/grey (morning). Calls included a harsh rattle-like 'trrrrrrt' and a clean 'tuc'.]

Warbler species: With so much to look at and try to identify, canopy feeding warblers were frequently ignored - hence the scarcity of records for some of the commoner species.

***Golden-spectacled Warbler** *Seicercus burkii* (7)

A commonly seen species from the 4th-6th and 12th-15th, with day totals of up to 20+, with virtually all records between Dunche and Lama Hotel.

***Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus affinis* (1)

At least three were seen on the 12th, near the lodge by the suspension bridge, between Bamboo Lodge and Lama Hotel.

***Grey-hooded Warbler** *Seicercus xanthoschistos* (7)

First seen on the 4th, between Dunche and Syabru, then noted daily from the 11th-15th between Lama Hotel, Shin Gompa and Dunche, and also in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

***Black-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus schisticeps* (1)

One was seen well near Lama Hotel on the 5th.

Superficially very like the Yellow-bellied Fantail, but when seen well subtly different, with the grey (waistcoat) sides to the breast obvious.

***Blyth's Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* (?)

Individuals considered to be of this species were frequently noted from the 5th-7th, between Syabru and Langtang, and again from the 12th-15th, between Lama Hotel and Dunche, with day totals in excess of 20. Tape recording of the song confirms the correct identification of this species.

This appeared to be one of the commoner species, but trying to separate individuals from the following species, without really knowing the essential differences, remained a problem throughout.

[*Western Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus occipitalis* (?)]

At Ghora Tabela on the 6th I made the following notes: warbler similar to above species, white underparts from chin to tail, bright olive green upperparts, darker grey/brown sides to broad dull green coronal stripe, long bright yellow supercilium, one obvious greater covert bar, second not very obvious medium covert bar, quite short tailed and possibly smaller? Song a single short phrase - a cross between Goldcrest and Blue Tit in tone.

Doesn't seem to quite fit this species - I didn't note the bill colour - but what was it?

In the Godaveri Botanical Gardens on the 18th, I noted wide coronal stripe, heavyish yellow bill, all white underparts, including the vent.]

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (2)

In the Kopundol district one was seen on the 16th, with two the following day in the Gokarna area, one of which sang briefly.

[*Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris* (1)

In the Gokarna area on the 17th a Garden Warbler-like warbler with a longish bill may have been this species, but views and details noted were insufficient for 100% identification.

The next day, in the Botanical Gardens, I noted: larger *phylloscopus* warbler, with a thin greater covert bar, browner primaries, plain pale olive green upperparts, paler, yellower underparts, bold yellow supercilium. Does this species look like this?]

[*Orange-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* (1)
The following description of a warbler seen at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, seems to best fit this species, though I'm told the orange wing bars are very obvious!

Olive mantle, grey/brown crown, creamy supercilium, dirty off-white underparts, greyish on flanks, white vent, pale fringes to tertials, yellowish rump and upper tail coverts, single slightly orangey wing bar.]

***Grey-faced Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* (1)**
Commonly seen on the 4th and 5th, between Dunche and Lama Hotel, with five plus noted on the first date and 10+ on the second. At least two were seen again in the Lama Hotel area on the 11th.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus chloronotus* (5)
One-two were noted occasionally between the 4th-15th en route from Dunche - Ghora Tabela, and from Syabru - Dunche.

Not studied that closely, but overall impression was that these were 'washed out' versions compared with the little gems seen in Britain. Apparently may be split as *P.chloronotus*.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* (1)
At least two were noted between Dunche and Syabru on the 4th.

[Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (1)
One, showing characteristics of this species, was seen briefly in the Kopundol district early on the 17th.

Seen with a putative Elyth's Reed Warbler - smaller, olive upperparts, uniformly pale underparts, long bold creamy yellow supercilium. Call a clean 'tic'.]

[*Tickell's Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* (1)
In the Gokarna area on the 17th several warblers were seen, which I simply described as pale plumaged Willow Warblers, noting that from underneath the outer tail feathers appeared pale. Hardly enough to aid identification, but what plain looking *phylloscopus* warblers occur? Migrant Chiffchaffs?]

***Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* (1)**
One male was seen well on the 13th near Bamboo Lodge.

***Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara* (3)**
First identified on the 6th, when a male was seen well near Lama Hotel. Single males were also seen on the 12th, in much the same area, and on the 15th just above the Trisuli Khola en route to Dunche.

[*Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* (1)
Brief glimpses of a flycatcher in the Gokarna area on the 17th suggested this species. It was essentially blue above, with orange and white underparts, but the precise distribution of the orange was not noted.]

***Verditer Flycatcher** *Muscicapa thalassina* (8)

First seen near Syabru on the 4th, when at least four were noted. One-three were also seen on the 5th-6th, the 12th-14th and 17th-18th, essentially between Syabru and Lama Hotel, and in the Gokarna and Phulchowki areas.

***Asian Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* (3)

Two were seen on the 12th near Lama Hotel and singles were identified at Chandrabari on the 15th and Phulchowki on the 18th.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris* (2)

One was identified in the Gokarna area on the 17th, with two singles, on Phulchowki and in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri, the next day.

***Ultramarine Flycatcher** *Ficedula superciliaris* (2)

Single males of this most attractive species were seen near Lama Hotel on the 6th and near Chandrabari en route to Dunche on the 15th.

***Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* (2)

One was seen well near Bamboo Lodge on the 12th and BD identified one in the valley below Syabru on the 13th.

***Orange-gorgetted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophilata* (8)

Another attractive flycatcher, first seen on the 4th, when about 10 were noted, between Dunche and Syabru, with one the next day and about 10 again on the 6th between Lama Hotel and Ghora Tabela. Up to five were seen almost daily from the 11th-15th, between Langtang and Dunche, via Syabru and Shin Gompa. At least three were also seen on Phulchowki on the 18th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (1)

At Chandrabari on the 15th a 'pair' was seen, with a male in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

***Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Rhipidura hypoxantha* (8)

First seen near Barkhu on the 4th then daily until the 7th, and again from the 11th-14th, with day totals up to 10 or so and a peak day total of about 50 on the 11th, between Langtang and Lama Hotel. Not seen any higher than in the forest below Langtang.

***White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola* (1)

One was seen well, amongst bamboo, in the river valley below Syabru on the 13th.

***Asian Paradise Flycatcher** *Tersiphone paradisi* (1)

At least one male and two females were seen well in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

***Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga albiventer* (1)

One was satisfactorily identified at Lama Hotel on the 12th, the tape recorded song providing confirmation.

My notes include: essentially dark brown, with creamy buff throat, pale fringes to underpart feathers producing a vermiculated appearance.

***Tailed Wren-Babbler** *Spelaeornis caudatus* (1)

One was seen extremely well, at close range, for several minutes high on Phulchowki on the 18th.

I noted the following: Tiny, very short tail, Wren coloured brown uppers, with pale speckling, rich ferruginous unmarked upper breast, with pale ferruginous fringes to black feathers on flanks and lower breast, forming attractive vermiculations. In my enjoyment I failed to note either the call or the song.

***Black-chinned Babbler** *Stachyris pyrrhops* (2)

On the 18th, in the secondary growth on the lower slopes of Phulchowki, a noisy active flock of at least five birds fed low in thick bushy scrub. It was just possible to see their generally ochre-like colour, with paler underparts, and tiny black square chin and black lores.

In retrospect, a bird glimpsed in bamboo thicket at Syabru on the 14th was also of this species.

***Black-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis nipalensis* (1)

On the 6th near Lama Hotel an extremely active feeding party, that moved through rapidly, contained about 20 birds of this species.

***White-throated Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax albogularis* (1)

A small flock of at least five was seen on the 12th between Lama Hotel and Bamboo Lodge.

***Striated Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax striatus* (2)

At least two were seen at Syabru on the 5th and another near Bamboo Lodge on the 12th.

Christened 'Road Runner' by BD!

Black-gorgetted Laughing Thrush *Garrulax pectoralis*

BD identified one on the 5th not far along the trail from Syabru.

***Variegated Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax variegatus* (5)

First identified at Syabru on the 5th, when at least two were seen, with another at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, a total of at least ten the next day between Ghora Tabela and Langtang, along which stretch five plus were seen on the 11th, with another two or more at Syabru again on the 14th.

***Spotted Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax ocellatus* (2)

At least four of these most attractive Laughing Thrushes were seen well on the 7th near Ghora Tabela, with one near Shin Gompa on the 15th.

***Streaked Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax lineatus* (7)

The most commonly seen Laughing Thrush, with daily records from the 5th-8th between Lama Hotel and Langtang, with a peak of 10+ on the 7th between Ghora Tabela and Langtang, and up to three daily from the 12th-14th between Lama Hotel and Syabru.

***Black-faced Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax affinis* (3)

On the 7th a total of about 20 was noted between Ghora Tabela and Langtang, with another two near Langtang the next day and on the 12th.

***Chestnut-crowned Laughing-Thrush** *Garrulax erythrocephalus* (2)

About five were seen near Lama Hotel on the 11th, when tape recorded song confirmed the identification, and one was seen well there the next morning. Others were seen at Syabru on the 14th and at Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Hoary Barwing** *Actinodura nipalensis* (1)

One was seen well on the 18th, high on Phulchowki.

***Chestnut-tailed Minla** *Minla strigula* (4)

At least two were first seen on the 5th near Bamboo Lodge, with two or more in the rhododendron/pine forest near Shin Gompa on the 14th, one there the next day, and at least two high on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***White-browed Fulvetta** *Alcippe vinipectus* (2)

Early identification of this species proved difficult, but a photograph taken between Langtang and Ghora Tabela on the 11th confirms that one was present there. Another was seen briefly and photographed in a bamboo thicket at Syabru on the 14th. Two-three were also seen on Phulchowki on the 18th.

***Black-capped Sibia** *Heterophasia capistrata* (10)

Seen daily from the 4th-7th between Dunche and Ghora Tabela, and again from the 11th-15th along the same route, but also including Syabru/Shin Gompa/Chandrabari/Dunche on the 14th-15th. Day totals ranged to 20+ and small flocks were commonly seen feeding in rhododendrons.

***Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis* (3)

At least two were first identified on the 4th near Syabru, with another two the next day in much the same area. One was seen on the 6th near Lama Hotel, with about 10 in that area on the 12th.

***Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* (1)

One was seen well near Ghora Tabela on the 7th.

***Rufous-vented Yuhina** *Yuhina occipitalis* (4)

The first was identified between Lama Hotel and Ghora Tabela on the 6th, with four seen on that day and at least three the next day en route to Langtang. Three or more were also seen at Syabru on the 14th, with one near Shin Gompa the next morning.

***Black-browed Tit** *Aegithalos iouschistos* (2)

One was seen well at Ghora Tabela on the 6th, with another, attracted by a Collared Owlet tape, in the pine forest near Shin Gompa on the 14th.

***Black-throated Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus* (6)

First identified between Dunche and Syabru on the 4th, when at least 10 were seen, including a pair visiting a nest. A similar number were seen the next day en route to Lama Hotel, with another two near Ghora Tabela on the 6th. Two were also seen at Lama Hotel on the 12th, with up to five or more between Syabru and Shin Gompa on the 14th, and a similar number below Chandrabari, en route to Dunche, the next day.

***Yellow-browed Tit** *Sylviparus modestus* (1)

One was seen at Lama Hotel on the 12th.

***Grey-crested Tit** *Parus dichrous* (4)

First identified on the 5th near Lama Hotel, with further singles near Ghora Tabela the next day and in the birch forest at Kyangjin Gomba on the 9th, with a flock of about 10 in the rhododendron/pine forest - attracted by a tape recording of Collared Owlet - near Shin Gomba on the 14th.

***Rufous-vented Black Tit** *Parus rubidiventris* (6)

Up to four were seen almost daily from the 6th-9th, between Lama Hotel and Kyangjin Gomba, with one near Ghora Tabela on the 11th and at least five on both the 14th and 15th in the rhododendron/pine forest near Shin Gomba.

Considerable variation in the extent of rufous was noted, some showing only a trace on the vent, others with a central rufous line from throat to vent, while the belly never appeared to be as grey as illustrated. Possibly of the race *P.r.beavani*.

Coal Tit *Parus ater aemodius* (2)

Details of only two sightings were noted, the first on the 6th near Ghora Tabela, followed by at least three in the pine forest at Kyangjin Gomba on the 9th.

Why this 'crested' tit isn't a different species from 'our' Coal Tit I can't understand!

Great Tit *Parus major nipalensis* (1)

The 'Grey' Tit of these parts. Just one was seen, in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri on the 18th.

***Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* (7)

Seen quite commonly from the 4th-6th and almost daily from the 11th-15th, essentially between Dunche and Ghora Tabela, including the return route via Shin Gomba.

Why this is a different species, with its double wing bar, from 'our' Great Tit I find difficult to understand!

***Black-lored Tit** *Parus xanthogenys* (2)

One was seen well on the 13th, on the hillside opposite Syabru. In the Gokarna area on the 17th at least three were seen involving an adult feeding newly fledged young.

***White-tailed Nuthatch** *Sitta himalayensis* (5)

Two were first seen on the 5th between Syabru and Lama Hotel, with almost daily sightings of up to five from the 12th-15th, between Lama Hotel and Chandrabari, via Shin Gomba, essentially in mature forests.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* (1)

One was seen well by PO and TP on the 4th, on some shady cliff faces en route from Dunche to Syabru.

Common Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* (2)

Singles were seen well near Syabru on the 4th and in the birch forest at Kyangjin Gomba on the 9th.

Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* (1)
Seen well from the bus at the Trisuli checkpoint on the 16th.

***Mrs. Gould's Sunbird** *Aethopyga gouldiae* (2)
The first one was identified near Lama Hotel on the 6th, with at least two others there the same day and one in much the same area on the 12th.

***Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis* (7)
The commonest sunbird and seen in quite widespread localities. The first was identified near Lama Hotel on the 6th, with about 20 between there and Ghora Tabela, where about five were seen the next day. There were almost daily records of up to 10 from the 11th-15th, essentially between Ghora Tabela and Lama Hotel, and Syabru, Shin Gompa and just below Chandrabari. At least five were also seen on Phulchowki on the 18th.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* (1)
One was seen briefly near Syabru on the 4th.

***Buff-bellied Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus* (4)
One-three were seen daily from the 12th-14th, with the first near Lama Hotel and others en route to the Syabru area. One was also seen in the Botanical Gardens in Godaveri on the 18th.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosa* (1)
The only one seen was in the Gokarna area on the 17th.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (4)
As is not unusual there were no sight records, individuals were only heard singing. In the Kopundol district one was heard singing well on the 16th and 17th from tall poplar-like trees in a mature garden. Individuals near Dunche on the 4th and another en route to Bamboo Lodge the next day may have been of this species or possibly Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* (4)
Two singles were seen on the 2nd in the Bagmati valley west of Patan. Two more singles were seen on the 3rd, en route to Dunche. Others were seen in the Syabru area on the 14th and near Dunche the next day, with two on the 17th in the Gokarna area.

***Grey-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus* (1)
One was seen well in an open garden area in the Kopundol district on the 2nd.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* (3)
Individuals, totalling 25+, in the Kopundol district and the Bagmati valley on the 2nd and again on the 16th-17th were considered to be this species.

This and the next species provided identification problems and in many cases little time was spent trying to separate them. Birds seen from the bus between Kathmandu and Dunche remained unidentified.

***Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* (5)
On the 5th and from the 12th-15th one-five or more were considered to be of this species. In the gorge near Bamboo

Lodge, in the Syabru area and along the Trisuli Khola near Dunche.

These birds were either showing less intensely black plumage, proportionately longer tails, or red eyes. Near the bee nests on the 13th I noted the call as 'shrip-drop-drop'.

***Yellow-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa flavirostris* (4)

This amazing looking bird was first seen near Syabru on the 4th, with two in much the same area the next morning. Two were also seen on both the 14th and 15th in the Syabru area again and below Chandrabari en route from Shin Gompa to Dunche.

***Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* (1)

Only seen in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri on the 18th, where there were about five.

***Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* (1)

Several brief flight views may have referred to this species. Singles were glimpsed on the 16th, en route between Dunche and Kathmandu and also in the Gokarna area on the 17th. The second bird showed a white then black tail tip, which I believe confirms the identification.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* (1)

BD saw one on the 3rd, near the entrance to the Langtang National Park, en route to Dunche.

Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (4)

Just one was actually seen, en route from Dunche on the 4th, with others heard on that date and the next day near Syabru, where calls were again heard on the 14th. Below Shin Gompa on the 15th more calls were heard.

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus* (4)

Seen daily between the 7th-10th, with day total estimates of 100+ in the Langtang and Kyangjin Gompa area.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (4)

As with the last species seen during the 7th-10th in the Langtang and Kyangjin Gompa area, with day totals of 10-20+.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* (6)

Very commonly seen in the Kathmandu Valley, with estimates of 100+ on most dates.

Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* (15)

Commonly seen during the trek from Dunche, with the first two noted in Trisuli on the 3rd. Two were also seen in the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri on the 18th.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (4)

Singles and pairs were occasionally seen, with the first near Ghora Tabela on the 6th and near Langtang the next day. Singles were also seen at Kyangjin Gompa on the 9th and 10th.

Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis* (6)

Commonly seen in the Kathmandu Valley, with day totals up to 50+.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (6)
Commonly seen in the Kathmandu Valley.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus malaccensis* (9)
Commonly seen in the Kathmandu Valley, en route to and in Dunche, with a few in Syabru on the 5th.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* (2)
Only seen well on the 16th and 17th in a large garden in the Kopundol district, with 20+ on the first date and about 10 the next morning.

This species caused quite a puzzle on the 17th, when the flock flew to open ground to feed. Suddenly I was looking at first a yellow version, then a grass green variety! The former had scaly yellow underparts and a yellowish/rufous tail. The previous evening I had noticed a similarly sized and shaped bird, within the flock in a small tree, showing yellowish olive colouration above and purer yellow underparts. However, I was unable to get a better view before the flock flew.

Rosefinch sp. *Carpodacus sp.*
On the 17th in the Gokarna area (1,300m) I studied a male rosefinch quite carefully as it sat in a tree in a tiny densely wooded vale, surrounded by cultivated land. I noted a small black chin (shadow maybe?) with reddish surrounding the bill base and interspersed with brown streaks on the crown, white fringed tertials, pinkish rump, quite heavy grey bill, finely streaked brown mantle.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* (2)
A feeding flock of about 20 was seen on the 2nd in a Kopundol district 'garden' of seeding mustard pods. On the 15th a pair was seen along the Trisuli Khola valley near Dunche.

***Beautiful Rosefinch** *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* (6)
The common rosefinch species, seen daily from the 6th-11th, from Ghora Tabela to Kyangjin. Day totals included 50+ on the 8th, between Langtang and Kyangjin Gompa. At least two were also seen between Syabru and Shin Gompa on the 14th.

The short, harsh, sparrow-like grating call-note was soon learned and enabled hen birds to be identified as this species.

***Pink-browed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rhodochrous* (1)
One pair was seen and the male photographed as it perched on a rhododendron bush near Shin Gompa on the 15th.

My notes include bright pinky red supercilium and underparts, thin dark eyeline, brown streaked mantle, thin lighter wing bar. What doesn't quite fit is my note regarding the call, which I described as a plaintive, rising 'whoeeee'. Unlike the calls on the Nepal tape for this species!

***Crimson-browed Finch** *Propryrhula subhimachala* (1)
A female, fitting the description of this species, was seen briefly on the 15th, on the edge of the Trisuli Khola valley above Dunche.

I only saw it flying away and noted a Crossbill sized bird, looking olive green, with a paler olive green rump. BD noted a thin yellow brow.

***Brown Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula nipalensis* (1)

At least two were seen well and photographed on the 15th, on the open wooded slopes above the Trisuli Khola valley, below Chandrabari en route to Dunche.

***Red-headed Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula erythrocephala* (5)

In the Syabru area OP saw at least four on the 4th and about 10 were seen there the next morning. At least two were also seen or heard at Lama Hotel on the 6th and 12th. At least five were noted on the 14th, in the rhododendron/pine forest near Shin Gompa.

***Collared Grosbeak** *Mycerobas affinis* (2)

The beautiful adult male was first seen in the pine forest near Shin Gompa on the 14th, with at least five there the next morning when a female was also identified.

We were confused for some time by a Whimbrel-like call in the pine forest near Shin Gompa on the 14th and 15th. It was eventually traced to this species, the female of which also appeared to be singing! I noted her 'song' as "whi-whi-whi-chweeee-whi" the third and fifth notes being higher. In retrospect the Whimbrel-like call was also heard at the Bamboo Lodge on the 13th.

***Spot-winged Grosbeak** *Mycerobas melanozanthos* (2)

A female was identified near Ghora Tabela on the 7th and a male was seen in much the same area on the 11th. One, more creamy than yellow, in the pine/rhododendron forest near Shin Gompa on the 15th, may well have been a juvenile.

***Crested Bunting** *Melophus lathamii* (4)

Singles were seen at Dhunche on the 4th, at Syabru on the 13th, near Dunche again on the 15th and near Trisuli on the 16th.

Total species identified: 194

I did not see the following: Woodcock, Common Koel,
Dollarbird, Darjeeling Pied
Woodpecker, Dark-throated Thrush,
Black-gorgetted Laughing Thrush
and Grey Treepie.

My species total 187, of which 108 were new.

Itinerary Summary

- 1st Arrive Kathmandu Kopundol district in evening
- 2nd Kopundol district, Bagmati Valley west of Patan, Kathmandu
- 3rd Kathmandu - Dunche
- 4th Commence trek Dunche - Syabru
- 5th Syabru - Lama Hotel
- 6th Lama Hotel - Ghora Tabela
- 7th Ghora Tabela - Langtang
- 8th Langtang - Kyangjin Gompa
- 9th Kyangjin Gompa
- 10th Kyangjin Gompa - Langtang
- 11th Langtang - Lama Hotel
- 12th Lama Hotel - Bamboo Lodge (staying in Sherpa Lodge)
- 13th Bamboo Lodge - Syabru
- 14th Syabru - Shin Gompa
- 15th Shin Gompa - Dunche End Trek
- 16th Dunche - Kathmandu, Kopundol district in evening
- 17th Kopundol district, Gokarna area, Kopundol district late pm
- 18th Phulchowki and Godaveri Botanical Gardens
- 19th Depart Kathmandu